

***Cuscuta denticulata* Engelm.**

desert dodder

Cuscutaceae (Dodder Family)

**Status:** State Threatened

**Rank:** G4S1

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1959): Flowers sessile or subsessile in small clusters, 5-merous, about 1/16 inch long. Calyx not fleshy, deeply divided, the lobes oval to orbicular, considerably overlapped, the margin irregularly erose-denticulate. Corolla not calyptrate on the developing capsule, the tube campanulate, slightly exceeding the calyx, the lobes ovate-lanceolate to ovate, overlapping at the base, spreading to ascending, about equaling the tube. Stamens slightly exserted. Anthers <1/16 inch long, about equaling the filaments, obovate-oblong, subentire to irregularly erose-dentate, united to midlength. Styles about 1/16 inch long, stigmas capitate. Capsule narrowly ovoid, not circumscissile, crested-thickened around the base of the style, the interstyler opening small or none. Seeds usually single.

**Identification Tips:** Identification is difficult due to the tiny flower size. A technical key is recommended.

**Phenology:** Flowers from July through August.

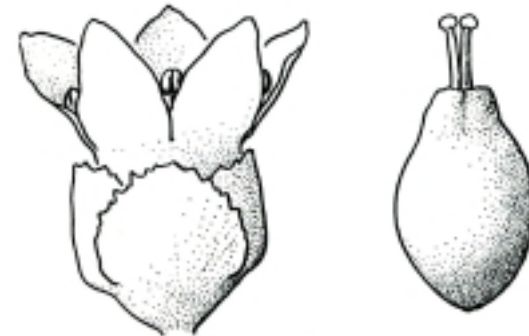
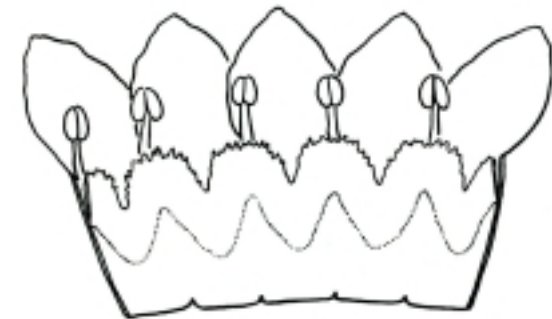
**Range:** Known from California to Utah, Nevada, Arizona and Baja California. In Washington and Idaho, populations are disjunct from the rest of the range of the species. Franklin County is currently the only known location of the species in Washington. There is also a record of this species from Benton County which may have been destroyed by agricultural conversion.

**Habitat:** Occurs on various shrubs (*Artemisia* and *Chrysothamnus*) within desert areas. The elevation of the occurrence in Washington is 880 feet. Associated species at the currently known extant site include *Artemisia tridentata*, *Poa sandbergii*, *Oryzopsis hymenoides*, *Astragalus caricinus*, *Erigeron poliospermus*, *Cymopterus terebinthinus*, *Helianthus cusickii*, and *Bromus tectorum*.

**Ecology:** The taxon is parasitic on a variety of native desert shrubs throughout its range. Many species of dodder are considered noxious weeds by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

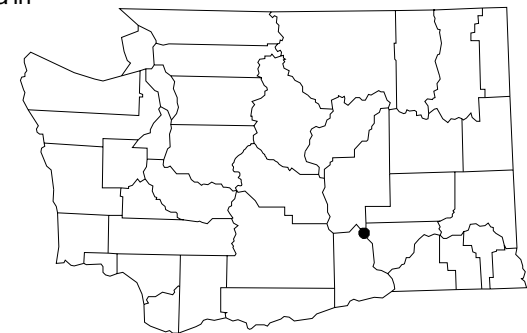
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Known distribution of  
*Cuscuta denticulata* in  
Washington



- Current (1980+)
- Historic (older than 1980)

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**State Status Comments:** There is only a single known occurrence of the taxon in Washington.

**Inventory Needs:** Additional inventory is needed throughout the Columbia Basin.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Agricultural conversion, grazing, vehicular traffic, road maintenance, and wildfire are all threats to the species.

**References:**

Cronquist, A. et al. 1984. *Intermountain Flora: Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume Four*. The New York Botanical Garden, New York. 573 pp.

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 4: Ericaceae Through Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 510 pp.